

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3711

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 7658

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN PRESS: THE CREDENTIALS CEREMONY; TARAPUR
FUEL SUPPLY; AND OTHER ASPECTS OF INDO-US RELATIONS

1. IN ITS COVERAGE OF AMBASSADOR GOHEEN'S PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS AND SUBSEQUENT CALL ON THE FOREIGN MINISTER, HALF OF THE SIX DELHI ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS MAY 27 CHOSE TO LEAD THEIR ARTICLES WITH THE CREDENTIALS CEREMONY AND HALF WITH THE MEETING WITH VAJPAYEE. IN REPORTING THE REMARKS MADE AT THE CEREMONY, THE PRESS HIGHLIGHTED TWO THEMES: (A) AMBASSADOR GOHEEN'S STATEMENT OF THE ROLE THAT INDIA WOULD PLAY IN DEALING WITH MAJOR INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND HIS EXPECTATION OF A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR INDO-US RELATIONS; AND (B) ACTING PRESIDENT JATTI'S COMMENT THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S MISSION MAY INVOLVE ARDUOUS NEGOTIATIONS BUT THAT THE GOI WOULD GLADLY FACILITATE ALL DISCUSSIONS IN A FRANK AND SINCERE SPIRIT.

2. "THE TIMES OF INDIA" AND THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" IN THEIR FRONT PAGE STORIES LINKED THE CALL UPON THE FOREIGN MINISTER
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WITH THE TARAPUR FUEL SUPPLY ISSUE AND VAJPAYEE'S COMING MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE IN PARIS. THE TIMES SAID THAT THE AMBASSADOR AND FOREIGN SECRETARY EXCHANGED VIEWS ON MATTERS OF "IMMEDIATE BILATERAL IMPORTANCE" AND NOTED THAT THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WOULD OCCUR WHEN VAJPAYEE AND VANCE MET. THE TIMES COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH BILATERAL POLITICAL RELATIONS ARE NOW

FREE FROM ANY CONTROVERSY, THE USG'S RESERVATIONS ON SUPPLY-
ING FUEL TO TARAPUR, FOR WHICH THE US IS UNDER "CONTRACTUAL
OBLIGATION", IS "ATTRACTING GROWING NOTICE" IN INDIA. THE
TIMES ADDED THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL OGI COMMENT ON
PRESS REPORTS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS DECIDED TO ALLOW THE
URANIUM SHIPMENT ON CONDITION THAT THERE BE FUTURE TALKS ON
NUCLEAR RELATIONS (DELHI 7573).

3. "THE INDIAN EXPRESS" SAID THAT THERE WAS NO WORD IN
DELHI WHETHER THE AMBASSADOR HAD CONVEYED TO THE FOREIGN
MINISTER THE EARLIER REPORTED "US DECISION TO ALLOW URANIUM
SHIPMENTS TO TARAPUR" AND SPECULATED THAT THE "REPORTED US
SUGGESTION" WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN PARIS. TURNING TO THE
CREDENTIALS CEREMONY, THE EXPRESS SAID THAT PRESIDENT JATTI'S
REFERENCES TO ARDUOUS NEGOTIATIONS WAS "PROMPTLY INTERPRETED
AS AN INDICATION THAT INDIA WOULD MAKE ITS VIEWS KNOWN ON ALL
ISSUES THAT CONFRONT INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS LIKE THE NUCLEAR
FUEL SUPPLIES AND THE ARMS AID WHICH PAKISTAN CONTINUES TO
RECEIVE FROM THE USA". THE EXPRESS CONTINUED, "BOTH THESE
ISSUES WILL WEIGH HEAVILY ON DR. GOHEEN'S SHOULDERS" IN THE
FIRST MONTHS OF HIS TENURE.

4. TARAPUR FUEL SUPPLY AND OTHER ASEPECTS OF THE INDO-US
RELATIONS WERE THE SUBJECTS OF EDITORIAL COMMENT ALSO ON
MAY 27. BOTH THE PRO-CONGRESS "NATIONAL HERALD" AND THE
PRO-MOSCOW "PATRIOT" WERE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE REPORTED
"DECISION" ON TARAPUR FUEL SUPPLY AND SAID THAT THE SUSPEN-
SION OF SUCH SUPPLY IN THE FIRST PLACE HAD BEEN IN VIOLATION
OF CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION. THE HERALD SAID THAT MR. CARTER'S
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"CONDITION" OF FUTURE TALKS WAS "POINTLESS" BECAUSE INDIA HAS
ALWAYS CATEGORICALLY DECLARED THAT IT WILL NOT BE A NUCLEAR
WEAPONS STATE AND MORARJI DESAI HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT INDIA'S
NUCLEAR POLICY REMAINS UNCHANGED. THE PATRIOT CALLED THE
SUSPENSION OF SUPPLY THE "CRUDEST ATTEMPT" TO BRING PRES-
SURE TO BEAR ON THE GOI TO CHANGE ITS NUCLEAR POLICY, AND
WARNED THAT RULING JANATA PARTY THAT A "POLICY OF APPEASE-
MENT" COULD ONLY SERVE AMERICAN INTERESTS AND DAMGE INDIA AS
AN INDEPENDENT AND NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY. THE PATRIOT EDITOR-
IAL ALSO ATTACKED THE US INDIAN OCEAN POLICY AND SAID THAT
ANOTHER US TASK FORCE HAD "SECRETLY ENTERED" INDIAN OCEAN
WATERS.

6. HIRANMAY KARLEKAR, EDITOR OF THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES", IN
A LENGTHY OP-ED PAGE ARTICLE, SAID THAT IT SEEMS TO BE "SPRING
AGAIN" IN INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND NOTED AMBASSADOR GO-
HEEN'S CREDENTIALS CEREMONY REMARKS. KARLEKAQ CITED SHARED
IDEALS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE GENUINE NON-ALIGNMENT POLICY
OF THE DESAI GOVERNMENT AS AMONG FACTORS FOR AN IMPROVED

CLIMATE. AFTER A PREDICTABLY INDIAN REVIEW OF US "COLD WAR" DIPLOMACY AND MILITARY ALLIANCES WHICH HAD FIRST PROVIDED PAKISTAN WITH ARMAMENTS, KARLEKAR WAS CAUTIOUSLY OPTOMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE. BUT HE SAW AS SENSITIVE ISSUES IN INDO-US RELATIONS THE QUESTION OF NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLY, AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO INDIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, AND ARMS SUPPLIES TO PAKISTAN. ON THE INDIAN OCEAN, KARLEKAR SAID THAT THE HOPES RAISED BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S STRESS ON DEMILITARIZATION "HAVE BEEN DASHED" BY THE REPORTED DISPATCH OF AMERICAN WARSHIPS INTO THE AREA AND BY THE REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR DIEGO GARCIA.
GOHEEN

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